

## ASSESSMENT REPORT 2012-2013

### **English Graduae**

(Instructional Degree Program)

### **M.A.**

(Degree Level)

#### **Program Mission:**

The mission of the Department of English and Philosophy is to provide quality education leading to intellectual growth and professional success. In regard to “intellectual growth,” the program is committed to preserving, interpreting, and promoting the unique multicultural heritage of the region, and achieves this both the range of classes offered and the kind of unique theses our students complete, many of which are focused on the literary, creative, and composition aspects of the Southwest.

In regard to “professional success,” the graduate program serves regional secondary school teachers, prospective community college teachers, students who plan to enter PhD programs, and students who seek stronger credentials in English for careers in journalism, publication, and professional writing. Each year, graduate assistantships are awarded competitively to full-time students. Along with tutoring in the Writing Center, graduate assistants undertake extensive teacher training in composition and gain considerable experience as composition instructors.

#### **Student Learning Outcome 1:**

Students will produce high-quality written work demonstrating their interpretative and analytical skills through mastery of relevant and current theoretical concepts.

#### **First Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:**

Learning Outcome #1 is assessed by evaluation of a student’s written work at three key points in their academic career: their qualifying exam, their thesis proposal, and their thesis. The two English faculty department members, utilizing a form, score these written works on a scale of 1-5 based on Quality of Written Work. These three scores are averaged, and a score of 3.5 or higher is considered success. Specifically, 100% of English MA graduates will average a 3.5 or higher for “Quality of Written Work.”

#### **Summary of Data:**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	2	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	2
Total Number of Students Assessed:	2	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100%

**Second Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:**

Learning Outcome #1 is further assessed by evaluation of a student's written work at three key points in their academic career: their qualifying exam, their thesis proposal, and their thesis. The two English faculty department members on the student's committee will, utilizing a form, score these written works on a scale of 1-5 based on Mastery of Relevant and Current Theoretical Concepts. These three scores are averaged, and a score of 3.5 or higher is considered success. Specifically, 100% of English MA graduates will average a 3.5 or higher for "Mastery Relevant and Current Theoretical Concepts."

**Summary of Data:**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	2	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	2	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100%

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:**

We employed the same basic OA procedures for 2012-2013 that we have in previous years. Due to a slight miscommunication regarding two students who defended their theses in Summer 2012 but did not graduate until Fall 2012, two of the four students who graduated were already assessed in the 2011-2012 OA report. Rather than assess them twice, which would skewed results, the 2012-2013 report only assesses the two students who graduated in Spring 2013. We remain committed to assessing ever graduate from our program, and will continue to do so.

As always, collecting all the appropriate data remains the most difficult aspect of Outcomes Assessment. As a relatively new Graduate Director (this is my second year), I have improved my collection techniques. While there were still a few missing forms from the 2012-2013 class, I have improved my form collecting techniques and am confident we will have very few missing forms for 2013-2014. As the previous Grad Director noted, "A continuing problem for the Outcomes Assessment process is the lack of forms being completed and submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies. Out of the seven graduate files evaluated, not one was complete. At the fall meeting of the Graduate Committee, I will explain the process yet again and provide faculty with electronic and hard copies of the revised forms. I shall also remain in the room to collect the completed forms at thesis proposals and orals defenses. I also shall consider reinstating the procedure followed in

the past whereby the Director of Graduate Studies sent a pass/fail letter to students after their qualifying exam. This would ensure that the Director of Graduate Studies knows when qualifying exams are undertaken and could seek out completed Outcomes Assessments forms from committee members.” I have been attempting to utilize these strategies, although scheduling conflicts have arisen.

The English graduate Faculty met in August 2013 to discuss the results of this year’s Outcome Assessment. The Outcomes Assessment Report for 2012-13 shows that the English MA Program is serving students very successfully and is surpassing most of its goals.

Learning Outcome #1 has been a strong area for our program, and continues to be so.

**Student Learning Outcome 2:**

Students will display mastery of the subject and form of their chosen concentration area (Literature, Creative Writing, or Linguistics and Composition).

**First Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:**

Learning Outcome #2 is assessed by evaluation of a student’s work at four key points in their academic career: their qualifying exam, their thesis proposal, their thesis defense, and their thesis. The two English faculty department members on the student’s committee will, utilizing a form, score these works on a scale of 1-5 based on Mastery of the Subject and Form. These four scores are averaged, and a score of 3.5 or higher is considered success. Specifically, 100% of English MA graduates will average a 3.5 or higher for “Mastery of the Subject and Form.”

**Summary of Data**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	2	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	2	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100%

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:**

Although all students met the minimum for Outcome #2, this was the greatest area of weakness revealed by this OA process. Student #2 in particular struggled with this area, resorting often to plot summary rather than true analysis in his thesis work. Anecdotally, I can also confirm this problem amongst the three students of the 2012-2013 class that did not complete their MA theses. During conversations with Graduate faculty and at Graduate meetings, we had several conversations about analysis as a weakness of the

2012-2013 class.

To improve Mastery of the Subject and Form, we discussed an increased emphasis on preparation for graduate school, particularly among students enter the MA program from NMHU. As a Faculty, we decided greater emphasis should be placed on undergraduate research, and several faculty redesigned their undergraduate assignments accordingly. There was also talk of requiring a 300 level academic writing class for all undergraduate majors.

At the graduate level, we discussed requiring students to take a 500 level Graduate Writing Workshop if their performance in English 601: Research Methods and Methodologies indicated they needed greater attention to their writing. Although we did not implement this change (changing program requirements mid-degree was deemed inappropriate), it remains a topic of conversation for this year.

### **Student Learning Outcome 3:**

Students will be able to conduct, synthesize, interpret, document, and present original academic research.

### **First Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:**

Learning Outcome #3 is assessed by evaluation of a student's written work at three key points in their academic career: their qualifying exam, their thesis proposal, and their thesis. The two English faculty department members on the student's committee will, utilizing a form, score these written works on a scale of 1-5 based on "Ability to Conduct, Synthesize, Interpret, and Document Research." These three scores are averaged, and a score of 3.5 or higher is considered success. Specifically, 100% of English MA graduates will average a 3.5 or higher for "Ability to Conduct, Synthesize, Interpret, and Document Research."

### **Summary of Data**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	2	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	2	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100%

### **Second Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:**

Learning Outcome #3 is further assessed by evaluation of a student's written work at three key points in their academic career: their qualifying exam, their thesis proposal, and their thesis. The two English faculty department members, utilizing a form, score these written works on a scale of 1-5 based on "Originality of Research or Creative Project." These three scores are averaged, and a score of 3.5 or higher is considered

success. Specifically, 100% of English MA graduates will average a 3.5 or higher for “Originality of Research or Creative Project.”

### Summary of Data

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	2	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	2	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	<b>100%</b>

### Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3:

All students meet the desired outcome for Learning Outcome #3, although some weakness was noted in Student #2’s research ability. The discussion we had for Learning Outcome #2 (noted above) apply for this area as well, as do the ideas for changing the program.